

rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies in a biological sample, containing at least one peptide according to Claim 1.

6. (Amended) A method for detecting rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies in a biological sample comprising:

contacting said biological sample with at least one peptide according to Claim 1 under conditions which allow the formation of a peptide/antibody complex with any rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies possibly present in the biological sample;

removing the unbound peptide from the peptide/antibody complex ; and

detecting the presence of the complex, whereby the presence or absence of rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies in said biological sample is determined.

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7. (Amended) A kit for detecting rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies in a biological sample comprising at least one peptide according to Claim 1, and buffers and reagents for constituting a reaction medium which allows the formation of a peptide/antibody complex, and/or means for detecting said peptide/antibody complex.

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9. (Amended) The antigenic composition of Claim 5 wherein the at least one peptide is labeled.

10. (Amended) The antigenic composition of Claim 5 wherein the at least one peptide is conjugated to a carrier molecule.

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12. (Amended) A kit for detecting rheumatoid arthritis-specific autoantibodies in a biological sample, comprising at least one peptide according to Claim 1, and means for detecting the peptide/antibody complex.

13. (Amended) An isolated peptide of claim 1, comprising the motif X1-Ser-Cit-His-X2 (SEQ ID NO: 7), wherein